

# THE HISTORY OF SWANWICK BETHEL CEMETERY AND PICNIC



1850

1985

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Nelda E. Robb

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The Historical Sketch written for the 50th Anniversary of the Swanwick Picnic  
was researched and written by Nelda E. Robb.

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# HISTORICAL SKETCH

by Nelda E. Robb

Nothing it seems happens singly. Things follow a natural rhythm of cause and effect. Thus 1850 came with events caused or related to prior events. With the discovery of gold in 1849, California had so increased her citizenry as to petition statehood as a free state. This natural event was upsetting the tense balance of fifteen free and fifteen slave states. So came Henry Clay's last valiant attempt at compromise to hold the Union stable yet a while longer. The Compromise of 1850 included California's admission to the Union as a free state and a much harsher fugitive slave law that so angered many Northerners.

Abraham Lincoln, now forty years old, returned to the deeply rutted muddy or dusty streets of Springfield from Washington, D.C., where he had finished his "only term as representative from Illinois". Again he resumed his law practice and began riding the Eighth Judicial Circuit of fourteen counties in the central part of the state. The year was to see the death of his father and his four year old son, Edward, as well as the birth of Willie, the third Lincoln child. Illinois was a raw fast growing state made up of over 851,400 citizens, deeply antislavery in the north and leaning shakily toward slavery in many southern section.

Perry County, now twenty-three years old was not yet completely settled. Many of her sixteen sections were more than half unclaimed or government land which usually sold for \$1.25 per acre. By far most of the homesteads were log cabin type homes and her people honest dirt farmers. There were only a few small towns and villages in the county. The 1850 census counted 5,278 people within her boundry.

The northwest corner section, Township 4S, Range 4W, also known as Grandcote, meaning Beautiful Prairie, was likely three-fourths claimed land. It contained two villages, Swanwick and Craig, now known as Winkle. Among the farm families who lived there were a few of the Associate Presbyterian faith, a deeply moral Protestant Sect who looked upon human slavery as a deadly sin. The Rev. James Couch Elliott who wrote the United Presbyterian Church history for the Combined History of Randolph, Monroe and Perry Counties, copyright 1883, states as early as 1840 "there were six or eight families residing in this vicinity who held membership in ...."the Hopewell Congregation" in Township 5S, Range 3W, approximately 10 to 12 miles away by the then existing roads. The Rev. Joseph Thompson, pastor of Hopewell Congregation, 1840-1846, frequently preached for these families in some of their homes, most likely



during the week or on Saturday. The old minutes of the Hopewell Congregation state that on March 28, 1844, Rev. Thompson was preaching in the Grandcote Prairie where John Woodside and John Huey had their children baptised, each a son. Rev. Elliott says in his history of Hopewell, "On account of some difficulties in the congregation, Rev. Thompson resigned in the year 1846." It is known that he presided over a session meeting there in November of 1846, but it seems Elder Joseph Craig, a landowner near Craig was not in attendance. Whether there was any connection is not known.

The Swanwick records state that the foundation for their congregation was organized on September 7, 1847, by two elders transferring from the Hopewell Congregation. Joseph Craig was a Hopewell elder, but there is no record of John C. Huey having been an elder. He was a church member in good standing. Possibly by this date there was a feeling among the people to have a church home of their own and interested people did their own organizing. It is likely John C. Huey was made an elder in this new organization. At least on March 23, 1850, John M. Woodside and his wife Lucinda Eveline Woodside deeded land for the sum of \$20.00, to John McMillan, Samuel Huey, and John M. Woodside, trustees of the Bethel Associate Presbyterian Church. That same year the first church was erected -- "To the Glory of God and the Good of all". This was a plain frame building, costing \$500.00. Members of the congregation hewed logs by hand and handled the construction chores. It was built on the deeded land about one-half mile southeast of the village of Swanwick. To the best of our knowledge this land was about six acres, with an area for the church with a fenced yard, because livestock roamed freely at that time; a grove in which to tie horses and rigs; a stile somewhere on the church yard for easier mounting and dismounting from either horseback or horse drawn vehicles; and a country church burying ground.

Rev. Elliott writes, "This congregation was organized October 12, 1850, by the Rev. David McDill, D.D., with twenty members." This was the first communion for the little band and likely the first opportunity to constitute and hold a session meeting. Thus the church was formally organized. The Rev. David McDill, D.D., was the minister of the Union Congregation south of Sparta during those years.

The Rev. Dale Robb, minister of the Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Illinois, writes, "It (the church) was founded in a grove near the intersection of a pioneer trail from Coulterville to Pinckneyville with a trail that led in a south-westerly direction toward Lost Prairie (Township 5S, Range 4W). That intersection is the present site of the Swanwick (Bethel) Cemetery.



File: \_\_\_\_\_ **ABSTRACT OF DEED** \_\_\_\_\_

Kind of Instrument (conveyance):  
(Other than Deed of Sale of Property)

COUNTY & STATE here recorded: PERRY Co ILLINOIS

NAME GRANTOR (Seller): JOHN M. WOODSIDE & WIFE LUCINDA E.  
OF \_\_\_\_\_ (county of residence) PERRY Co

NAME OF GRANTEE (Buyer): JOHN M. MILLAN, SAMUEL HUBB, & JOHN A. WOODSIDE  
OF TRUSTEES BETHEL CEMETERY (county of residence) PERRY

Book No. D Page 255 Date of Deed: MARCH 23, 1850  
Date Recorded: MAY 10, 1850

County and State where document made: PERRY Co  
(If other than the above county)

Amount of Acreage, etc.: \_\_\_\_\_ Selling Price: \$20.00

Property description: NE 1/4 SW 1/4 Sec 22 T4S R43

Location and boundaries: \_\_\_\_\_

Original or Previous Owners, if given: \_\_\_\_\_

ANY OTHER PERTINENT FACTS: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Witnesses: R. A. WILLIAMS ROBERT L. WOODSIDE  
Signature(s): JOHN M. WOODSIDE LUCINDA E. WOODSIDE  
A. H. WILLIAMS J. A. P.

The earliest grave known in Bethel Cemetery is that of Jane Dermond, wife of John Dermond. She was born in 1782 and died May 16, 1850, aged around 68 years. Jane Dermond had a son Peter Dermond of Coulterville, who owned land in Perry County. In his 71st year he made a will on September 3, 1881, in which he requests: "Bury me beside Mother and Sister in the cemetery near Swanwick." Peter Dermond died in 1883. The following are direct quotes from the then existing Pinckneyville Paper (probably the Perry County Times) August 12, 1883, from the Grandcote News section, "Pete, an old gentleman,



died Thursday last." August 17, 1883, the Craig correspondent wrote, "Peter Derman (Dermond) was buried in Bethel Cemetery recently. Peter's mother, an Irish lady was the first corps (corpse) that was ever laid away in that burying ground".

Old records which may be incomplete show at least three other interments that year:

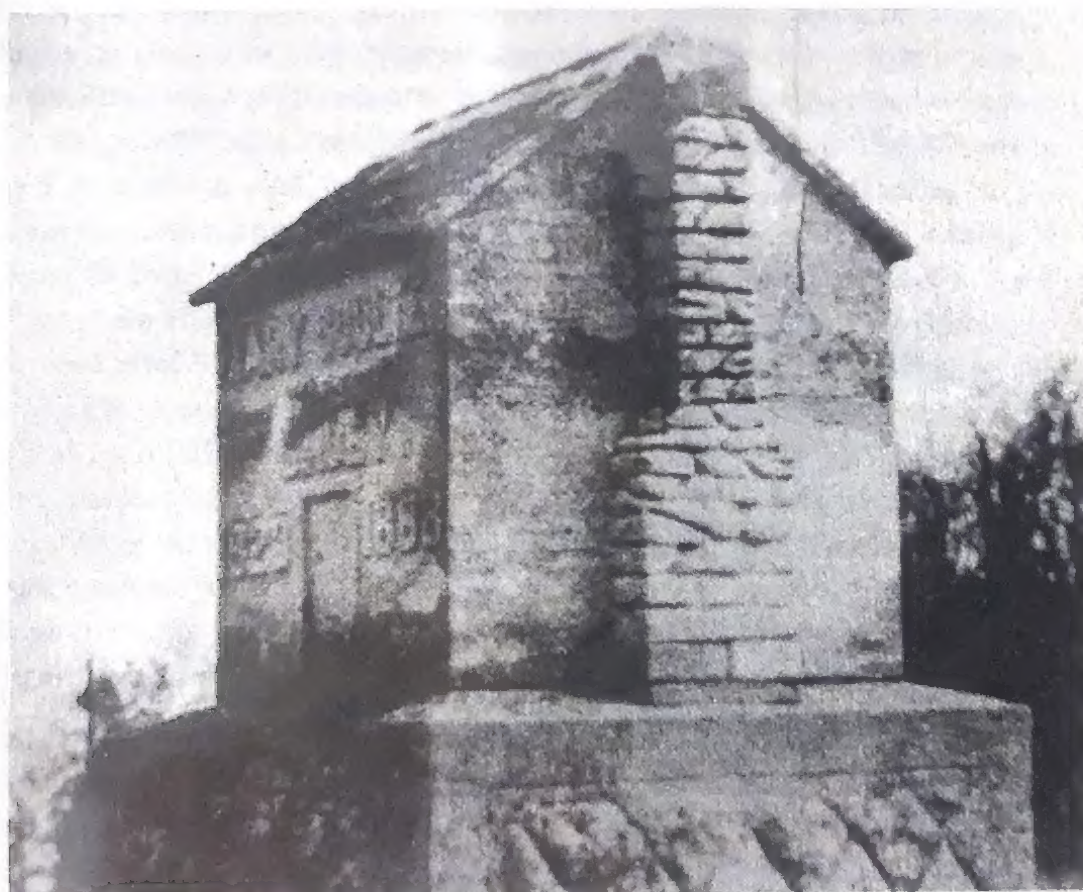
Robert Jone - son of Mathew and Matilda Ervin, b. and d. 1850.

Nancy Dermond b. 1822 d. Dec. 16, 1850.

(This was Jane Dermond's daughter, Peter's sister)

Margaret N. Huey - daughter of Samuel and Mary Ann Leslie

Huey, died June 1, 1850, aged 1 year, 1 month, 13 days.



This unusual monumental stone in the original cemetery of the Swanwick Bethel Cemetery has been written about and its picture used in several articles on interesting cemetery stones. It is that of the Samuel Huey family. Samuel Huey was a trustee of the old church originally built on the grounds.

The north side which can be seen has the name of Mary Coulter, wife of S. Huey, 1823-1886. Mary was his second wife. The west side shows the outside chimney which has broken off at the roof level. On the south side is Samuel Huey, 1813-1887 while the east side bears the name of a son, Samuel Harvey, 1859-1886. Samuel's first Mary Ann Leslie Huey and their daughter, Margaret N. Huey of one year each have their own stones just north of this monument. Notice the door of the cabin type stone. The latch string is hanging out, denoting "Welcome".



In the next year, 1851, we feel certain there were at least five new graves added. They were:

John C., son of J.M. and L.E. Woodside, died Feb. 11, 1851, aged 1 year, 2 months, 18 days. (A son of the family who deeded the ground for the church and cemetery).

Martin, son of David and Elizabeth Curry. Died June 27, 1851, aged 2 years.

Mary Jane, daughter of Wm. and Rebecca Gamble.

Catharine Ann Williams, died September 11, 1851, aged 1 year.

Thomas, son of H.H. and Isabelle McCrary, died Oct. 7, 1851, aged 17 years, 1 month.

As a matter of some interest are three white stones, shaped alike, which stand in the southwest corner of the original cemetery. Two of the graves are of murdered men and the other is the wife of one. The first stone to the south is that of Hugh Reed, native of Ireland, died November 11, 1858, aged 37 years. On the second stone one sees: Samuel Hunter, a native of Donegal Ireland, died November 16, 1858, aged 36 years. The third stone is that of Jane, wife of Hugh Reed, a native of County Donegal, died December 28, 1861, aged 48 years. The killing took place in what was once known as the Cunningham place, north of Spring Hill in section 13, Township 4S, Range 4W. In 1985, it is the home of the Stanley J. Morris family. Over a century and a quarter have gone by and the stories are so vastly different they can not be reconciled. It has been told a butcher knife was the death weapon. Hugh Reed is said to have died the same day <sup>while</sup> Samuel Hunter <sup>died 5 days later.</sup> Some say they did each other in, while others say Samuel Hunter declared, "Our best friend did it." Exactly what part if any Jane Reed played is also lost with the passing years. It was thought that Jane Reed was the older sister of Samuel Hunter, but there are those who say "Nay!" Even those fairly simple times had their violent moments.

It appears for several years the church had no regular pastor but did have services preached by Rev. James Morrow who served as a supply minister as well as others. During these years, in 1858 to be exact, there was a national church merger and the congregation became the Bethel United Presbyterian Church. In April 1860, Bethel installed the Irish born Rev. Daniel Steele who served them throughout the Civil War and the sad time of President Lincoln's assassination. In the country cemetery, new graves were added, and many homes forfeited family members for the duration of the struggle.

How many lost their lives during the war is not positively known, but what we do know follows:



Corporal Samuel B. Leslie, wagon master, of the 30th Infantry, Co. "A", died September 8, 1862.

Private John A. Huey of the 31st Infantry, Co. "A", died March 1, 1862 of wounds.

Private Jasper North of the 31st Infantry, Co. "A", died March 11, 1862.

Recruit William P. Elliott died in Andersonville Prison at Marion, Georgia, September 23 or 24, 1864. Recruit Elliott was taken before Atlanta, July 22, 1864, and was a prisoner of war. His death was prison related - lack of food, shelter, and unsanitary conditions. He was of the 30th Regiment, Illinois Volunteers, Co. "C". Wm. P. Elliott <sup>was the brother of Rev. J.C. Elliott.</sup> He is likely buried among other Andersonville prisoners of like fate in Georgia. His name is on the stone of his father as a memorial.

Private Hawkins Ragland of the 31st Infantry, died at home, June 3, 1862, of typhoid and complications which caused his tongue to rot off.

Private Hugh Kell Wilson of the 80th Infantry Co. "F", was killed at Perryville, Kentucky, on October 8, 1862. This was the first day of the battle for Perryville. It was a hot Autumn day and each side was hunting water, when both sides met accidentally at a stream in the afternoon, the battle began. Private Wilson was shot through with a lead bullet and fell while handing his gun to another soldier to be loaded. His army buddies buried him under a tree not far from where he fell. They carved his initials on the tree thinking they could later return to the spot. His tomb is now known only to God. Private Wilson's name is on a stone with that of his wife as a memorial.

What is known of the other twenty-four Civil War Veterans who are honored by small flags on their graves each Memorial Day is listed as follows:

Private Rensellar Wilkey of the 80th Infantry, Co. "F" was discharged for disability.

Private John B. Craig of the 80th Infantry, Co. "F" was discharged disabled July 1, 1863.

Recruit Thomas P. Woodside was of the 81st Infantry, Co. "C" but was transferred to the 58th Illinois Infantry. He was mustered out March 23, 1866.

Private Robert H. Allen of the 80th Infantry Co. "F" was mustered out June 10, 1865 as Sergeant.

Recruit Enoch R. Maxwell of the 31st Infantry was mustered out July 19, 1865.

Captain William Miles Adair was of the 30th Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry, Co. "C". Captain Adair rose through the ranks from Private, to Orderly Sergeant, to 2nd Lieutenant, to 1st Lieutenant, to Captain of Company. William saw a great deal of service. He was captured and for a short while was a prisoner but he was exchanged. Later he marched with Sherman on his push to the sea. He was mustered out after nearly four years service in Springfield, Illinois, on July 17, 1865. He returned to the Swanwick area and led a long useful life.

Corporal Alexander Craig of the 81st Infantry, Co. "C", entered as a recruit but was transferred to the 58th Illinois. He was mustered out on April 1, 1866 as Corporal.

1st Lieutenant Davidson C. Moore was of the 31st Infantry. He resigned June 3, 1864. It is interesting that Davidson C. Moore also served his country in the Mexican War. He was mustered out as Sergeant on June 18, 1847, at Camargo, Mexico.

Private James McNulty of the 30th Illinois Infantry, Co. "C" was mustered out June 9, 1865.

Veteran Robert Gamble of the 31st Infantry, was mustered out July 19, 1865.

Moore Gourley - in the records was found Private Moore Girley of the Fifth Cavalry, Co. "K", mustered out as veteran, October 27, 1864. Possibly the same man.

James J. Allen - in the records was found Private James Y. Allen of the 81st Infantry, Co., "C", who was mustered out August 5, 1865. Again possibly the same Man.

Unassigned Recruit Andrew Wilson was of the 31st Infantry, Co. "K".

John Gamble, Sr. was of the 31st Illinois Infantry, Co. "A".

John Gamble, Jr. was of the 10th Missouri, Co. "F".

Sergeant Samuel Montgomery was of the 31st Illinois Infantry, Co. "A".

Private James M. Luna was of the 17th Illinois Infantry, Co. "E".

Private George Irwin or Erwin was of the 78th Indiana Infantry, Co. "D".



2nd Lt. W.H. Pinkerton was of the 5th Illinois Cavalry, Co. "H". He died June 5, 1911.

Private Fredrick Jausel was of the 1st Missouri Cavalry, Co. "A". Private Jausel was wounded in the hand and when it healed there was a hole through his palm. He died October 10, 1902.

Private William H. Darrough was of the 81st Illinois Infantry, Co. "C". He died September 26, 1913.

Charles Fisher was of Missouri Infantry, Co. "B".

Private Robert F. Johnston of the 31st Illinois Infantry, Co. "H". He died in 1917.

William Cupples was from Fairfield County, Ohio. He was a married man with several children but he was drafted into service. He was sent to a camp in Tennessee. Here the conditions were unsanitary and the food so bad that he became ill. The camp doctor sent him home to regain health and report back to duty. While he was home the war ended. Wm. Cupples was of the 176th Ohio Infantry, Co. "B". His burial in the Swanwick Bethel Cemetery was December, 1898.

No greater than the population of Grandcote Section and neighboring communities of Perry County would have been in the early 1860's, this is a very great number indeed. Some came to the area after the Civil War, no doubt, and made it their home. Still the number seems large. A part of the answer must lie in the "leaven of the yeast of faith and belief" preached by the then United Presbyterian Church - the same church founded in 1850. Church role names of Woodside, Huey, Elliott, Adair, Wilson and Craig to name but a few, are those same names borne by the soldiers. By this time there were now many families of other faiths among the citizens, especially some Baptists. Religious beliefs were strong and the President of the nation was also a son of Illinois and Kentucky.

Rev. David Steele left the Bethel Church in 1866. Then the pulpit was vacant for two years, depending upon supply ministers available. In 1868, the Rev. J.C. Elliott came to stay as pastor until 1894. Rev. Elliott was a son of an Illinois pioneer family. When he came about three years after the Civil War, church membership was about seventy-five souls. Through the years of his ministry, church membership increased to over one hundred-thirty. It must be remembered the area was filling up and population was increasing. The nation was growing in wealth as well as area and number of states. In 1873 and 1874, it was deemed necessary to repair the original building. The dollar cost for repairs was

now \$550.00, fifty dollars more than the original outlay of money, but times were changing. People now were handling money and trade or barter was on the decrease. Frame homes had and were almost totally replacing cabin type dwellings. Railroads were binding rural areas to centers of population and industry. Swanwick and Craig became caught up in the general expansion and growth of the county, state and nation.

Swanwick was "laid out" by William Moore and surveyed and platted by D.C. Benson, Deputy County Surveyor, May 27, 1871." It had a depot on the north side of the Cairo Short Line Railroad tracks. By 1880 W.H. Ferguson was a practicing physician. There were two general stores. One was run by William Gray who was also the Swanwick postmaster. No doubt the post office was in one corner of his general store. The other store was that of Harmon and Adair. This is the same Captain William M. Adair, now married and turned merchant after he had tried farming upon his return from the war. James Luna was the village blacksmith and Annias Schocknese served the community as carpenter. W. Soukup dealt in grain while D.J. Woodside was the community carriage maker. With the times, the railroad was largely responsible for much of this growth and expansion.



POSTCARD PHOTO — COURTESY OF MR. HARRY KOCH

To date, we cannot date this picture or identify the ladies in the door way. Evidently it was between 1880 and 1928 when the name likely became Winkle. In 1904 when Joseph Winkle bought the area which was known as Craig, he tried to change the name from Craig to Winkle but for some unknown reason he was unable to do so. Thus the name Craig was kept.



Craig could not be left behind. It was laid out the same year by William Craig and surveyed and platted by William Golightly, County Surveyor, on October 23, 1871. The postmaster was J. Allen as Craig was on the same Cairo Short Line Railroad. A general store was run by W.K. Pennoyer.

With all these changes a decision was made in or about 1889 or early 1890 to raze the original church and move the church home into the village of Swanwick. It seems the old frame building was dismantled. Mr. Raymond Hubler of Swanwick states that according to the abstract of his property, some of the old beams may have been purchased and used to build the house in which he and his wife live.



The Swanwick Bethel United Presbyterian Church located on lots 81 & 82, south of the railroad and east of the school building. This church was dedicated Dec. 2, 1890 and burned when struck by lightening in May 1910. Notice the women's attire.

The second church for the Bethel United Presbyterian congregation was built east of the Swanwick Grade School on the south side of the railroad tracks. In 1890 there was a school building in Swanwick in much the same place where the vacated building is now. This church was also a frame building with a tall steeple that could be seen for miles. It was larger, of course, than the old building with the pulpit at the north end. The choir occupied the square west of the pulpit and there was a space at the northeast corner for a Sabbath School class. The pews were arranged in rows on each side with a space about mid-way of the church for the "pot bellied" stove. The door on the south opened into a vestibule and from it an enclosed stairway led up to an area or balcony which was fitted in front by a balustrade for safety as well as aesthetic reasons. This building was dedicated in December 1890. Rev. Elliott was still the minister and he lived in the home now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Blair McIntyre. It was his duty ever so often to journey back over that half mile and enter into that country burial ground some child or member of his church or citizen of the community. The church still retained all rights to the cemetery. But as from the beginning it was the last home for all peoples of the area regardless of their faith or creed.

When Rev. Elliott retired in 1894 the church had no installed minister until 1898 when the Rev. Andrew T. Hemphill came to serve for about five years until 1903. Again for a period of nearly four years the congregation was without a pastor until Rev. H.F. Hazlett was there from 1907-1908. It was in June, 1908 that Rev. J.C. Elliott passed away and for the last time his earthly body made that half-mile trip. It is said that his grave is within the boundary of the old church. Many say he lies under the pulpit site of that church, while others avow he is buried where the steps were. Either place is one in which he would surely feel comfortable - whether where he had so often led his flock in worship or where he shook their hands and welcomed them to services or bade them farewell for another week. Many years earlier Rev. Elliott's father and a small daughter were laid to rest in this same cemetery and in December of 1873 he buried his first wife, Lydia Ann Moreland Elliott, beside the little one. The second Mrs. Elliot, Nancy Henderson Elliott, would in later years be buried beside him.

In 1909, Rev. E.E. Karnes took up the Swanwick charge. The next spring, in May, 1910, the relatively new church was struck by lightning and burned completely. Services were held in the school building until another house of worship could be constructed. A new site was chosen and land deeded as a gift by Robert J. Smiley and his wife Lettie was used. This church yard was outside the platted town, across the road east and a bit south from the last lot,



number 121. Many good folk outside the congregation donated time and money to rebuild. The young people of the congregation held ice cream socials to earn money to buy the memorial window on the north side of the church, as well as the addition of the Sabbath School room and balcony. This church, the present one, was dedicated on August 11, 1912. Rev. Karnes had left the year before in 1911.

During the early years of the twentieth century, the little village continued slowly to expand. Sometimes there were as many as three and even four stores doing business, buying farm produce and selling staples like salt, sugar, coffee, tea, crackers, cheese, kerosene and oil burning lamp parts, to name only a few. The railway constructed cattle pens along the tracks to the south and these were kept painted white. Animals were shipped and bought. One time the Johnston Brothers bought a car load of western horses which had to be broken before they were saleable. Another time, Mr. Matt Robb had a carload of goats shipped in, which he took to a field of scrub timber, hoping they would eat and kill the underbrush. Later they were shipped away but to this very day that area bears the nickname, "The Goat Pasture". Farmers bought lime by the carload and shoveled it off into their wagons to take to their fields for spreading. They loaded out carloads of hay to be shipped elsewhere and likely carloads of grain were shipped from the elevator before it too burned. The little village had its triumphs and its sorrows, its successes and failures, but it never really burst its seams with growth.

Craig on the other hand was a different story. For many years it lagged somewhat behind Swanwick. True, it had its own store, post office and a few businesses but it was not until the early 1900's that things began to get up and really go. Years before the state geologists had reported a great abundance of coal in Perry County. Not until the steam locomotive of the railway created the first real market was there much thought of development. Most local people were still wood burners for necessary heat and cooking.

One Joseph Winkle, a land speculator and wealthy artificial stone manufacturer, had been buying land all about Craig, until by 1902, he held roughly one-fourth of section 25. This land lay mostly north of Craig. He held as well a considerable amount in Section 26. The Chicago-Craig<sup>Coal</sup> Co., owned about another one-fourth of Section 25 to the west and south of the village. A later plat book shows J. Winkle had acquired the holdings of the Chicago-Craig<sup>Coal</sup> Co., and even more. It seems he even bought most of the platted town of Craig. Now was a time to make money. In about 1904, the Golden Eagle mine came to Craig. Workers were needed. A new type of people moved into the small square look-alike frame houses Mr. Winkle was busy having constructed. He

rented them to miners for \$8.00 per month. The railway, now the Illinois Central Railroad, put in spur tracks. Immediately there was a need for consumer goods. Mr. Harry Goddard built a huge store for the time and the area. This building likely took shape and form between 1905 to 1907. It is said he employed eight to ten clerks for his business. By 1925 the mine had built up its payroll to 200 laborers who took home \$15,000.00, every two weeks. Many citizens of the area either worked in this mine or remembers it well. In the early days of growth, Mr. Winkle dropped the name of Craig and used his own for the big little town.



POSTCARD PHOTOS — COURTESY OF MR. HARRY KOCH

Workmen in the process of erecting Mr. Harry Goddard's general merchandise store in Winkle. Early 1900's when this building was constructed in Winkle. Notice material far out in the main street past the hitching rack.



Winkle Mercantile and Agricultural Co. now nearing completion. The old hitching rack is gone and a concrete sidewalk has been made completely to the entry way of the building. Postcard postmarked 1908.

At its heyday, Winkle had grown to around 300-350 inhabitants. It boasted a three-story hotel, restaurant, barber shop, other stores besides the Winkle Mercantile and Agricultural Company run by Mr. Goddard, and a small weekly newspaper called the "Winkle Eagle". The school and picturesque white Baptist Church were on the south side of the Pinckneyville road, almost out of town. The big, little town prospered too, for a period of twenty or so years - through the World War I years and the boom days immediately following. Then the world wide depression aftermath of the war, hit the United States in 1929 and even Swanwick and Winkle felt the shock waves. The mine failed and the big, little town started an irreversible decline.

Nothing really happens as a lone event. The years of prosperity were years that brought many new graves to the quiet country cemetery. A glance over the polished granite stones revealed new and different names from a decade or two ago. Nor had there been such a liberal outpouring of young manhood for the war to end all wars, World War I.

The church in Swanwick was having a succession of ministers meanwhile during these years:

Rev. R.J. Kyle, 1914-1916

Rev. J.R. McIlroy, 1917-1920

Rev. ~~T~~ay, 1921-1922

Rev. Willis Crafts, 1922-1924

Rev. A.T. Moore, 1925-1928

Rev. Frank R. McLean, 1928-1939

Perhaps due to the changing mood of the country, the get-rich-quick idea or the philosophy of materialism, which came sweeping over the country during the boom days in conjunction with a subtle disillusionment that followed World War I, the church seemed to dwindle. It appeared to lose a great deal of its sway over the minds and hearts of those in its midst. The "Great Depression" also had a deep impact upon its activity. Sometime during these years it was made a joint pastorate with the Coulterville United Presbyterian Congregation.

Along with the church, the cemetery suffered. The prairie sought to claim back its own. Prairie or Buffalo grass, Blue grass, Water grasses, Pokeberry, Mullein, Milkweed, Black-eyed Susans, and Spanish Needle, each in its season strove to live there. Oh, there were plots that were groomed and new grave sites were cleaned but the old pioneer spirit of genuine neighborliness had greatly eroded. Plots whose families were completely gone from the area, or whose family names had simply died out grew unkempt and rank. Even many who still lived in the area were careless. To a passerby the place looked ragged and utterly desolate. So it continued for many years with tufts of prairie grass ever gaining



strength and choling out other species. Finally it became a field of tawny coarse grass waving in the winds that crossed the prairie showing only the tops of the taller grave stones. This was the condition in the 1920's.

Just when there began to be a feeling of community shame and disgrace for the condition of the cemetery is not really known. But as the whole country began slowly to pull itself up from the depths of poverty and lack of gainful employment resulting from the Depression, old values began to emerge. Early minutes kept or not kept of the first endeavors seem to be lost. It is believed they possibly perished in a fire at Homer Pressley's home. Thus this early era of the Swanwick picnic days is being written from a conglomerate of community memory.

Please consider what fickle thing memory is colored either by success and pleasure or clouded by disappointment and hurt! It is hoped this record fairly well matches that of your recollections.

Several individuals have recalled a clean-up picnic. It was one in which as many of the community as could came for a day of work at the cemetery with basket dinners and commoraderie. This appears to have taken place in the very early 1930's. No time of the year was noted. Perhaps from this experience came the idea of a money making picnic for cemetery benefit. In 1935 this type of venture was undertaken. That picnic was joint venture of the church and community, it is thought. The committee seems to have been Emmerson Shaw, Walter Cunningham and Felix Frassato from the church and Joe Cunningham and Bert Stewart from the surrounding area. All have passed away but Mr. Felix Frassato. Whether or not it made much money is somewhat disputed. Food figured prominently from the beginning. It is believed nearly everything was donated. An old iron range fed by sticks of stovewood was set up in the open on which to fry chicken. No one recalls what else may have been served. The tables where the food was eaten were also under the open sky. There were serving girls, as a person remembers that as her main task. All necessary equipment was brought from the homes of the workers and returned afterward. If memory serves well Skeets and Frankie, radio stars, entertained. It seems a makeshift type of stage was put up and plank seats were fixed for an audience. It likely happened in August.

From this first effort, maybe a learning experience, came yearly picnics which were profitable. The first minutes available are those of 1947, which show a financial report given by Mr. Homer Pressley, Secretary-Treasurer of cemetery as follows:

Money in the bank .....	\$ 942.24
Invested in bonds .....	1100.00
Useable cash .....	122.45
TOTAL ASSETS .....	<u>\$2,164.69</u>



To all to whom these Presents Shall Come, Greeting:

Whereas, a PETITION, duly signed by Herbert C. Stewart,  
B. H. Leich, Mary Darfough, et al

having been filed in the Office of the Secretary of State on the 25th  
day of September A.D. 19 48 for the organization of the  
SWANWICK BETHEL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

under and in accordance with the provisions of an act entitled "An Act to  
provide for the organization, ownership, management, and control of Cemetery  
Associations," approved May 14, 1908, and all acts amendatory thereof, a copy  
of which petition is hereto attached.

I, EDWARD J. BARRETT, Secretary of State, of the State of Illinois, by virtue  
of the powers and duties vested in me by law, do hereby certify that the said  
SWANWICK BETHEL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

is a legally organized association in accordance with the provisions of the  
above named act.

In Testimony Whereof, I hereto set my hand and use to  
be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Illinois  
Done at the City of Springfield this 25th  
day of September A.D. 19 48 and  
of the Independence of the United States  
the one hundred and 73rd



Edward Barrett  
SECRETARY OF STATE

All of these funds may not have been earned at picnics. It appears that Mr. Pressley an honest and wise citizen of the Winkle area, served as cemetery sexton who sold lots and oversaw grave digging to be sure it was done at the proper place. At this April 12, 1947 meeting "Mr Pressley was given a standing vote of thanks for the excellent work he has done for the cemetery." At that meeting Mrs. Ethel Quigley was made Mr. Pressley's assistant to lighten somewhat his load of work.

This April meeting, which took place at the Swanwick School, was called to decide, according to the minutes, who should control the annual picnic. One hundred-sixteen persons were present. The minutes state "Beginning of first picnic explained, questions, discussion and explanation of the founding of the cemetery and picnic followed. Lots have been sold as far back as 1908 or more." A time for some hard decisions had arrived. Through these first formative years the community and the church had labored together in an uneasy harmony. In March of 1946, roadway of 25 feet for the west side of the cemetery had been purchased from Robert Cupples and his wife Lottie. This new property legally was deeded to the United Presbyterian Church of Swanwick, as that body still owned and therefore controlled the cemetery. For about eleven years many interested people of several faiths and creeds had worked and worked hard to make funds for cemetery upkeep and improvement. These people looked uneasily at a small church who might have the power to dictate how money might be used. The church on the other hand knew well who held all legal rights to the cemetery. The picnic was the money maker and therefore it seemed important who controlled this function. The minutes state that it was unanimously voted for the community at large to control the picnic.

The remainder of that meeting was concerned with plans for the next picnic. The group retained all the old picnic committee who were H.C. Stewart, John Bicket, Feliz Frassato, Emerson Shaw, Walter Cunningham, Homer Pressley and added Ben Leich, Mrs. Lawrence Darrough and Virgil Davis. A resolutions committee drew up a set of seven resolutions, two of which are quoted as follows: "3rd and be it resolved that we try to impress upon everyone that their help and co-operation are needed to carry on the cemetery work. 6th We as a Resolutions Committee suggest that graves be leveled and that more ground be purchased for use of cemetery."

It is interesting to notice in passing that Mr. Crary kept the mowing done in 1946 and 1947 for \$30.00 per year. Bert Overton was asked that year to help Mr. Pressley with lot sales. Graves were filled in and leveled for a nicer appearance and convenience in care. The roadway was staked and prepared for rock. Lumber was also purchased to construct some tables and a 4 in. concrete floor



was laid in the kitchen. During those first eleven years a rectangular kitchen had been built in the southeastern corner of the land and now it was getting some attention. The 1947 picnic made a profit of over \$995.00.

At a meeting in May 1948, it was voted to form an association or corporation on a vote of 24 for and 3 against. A motion made by Everett Lamont and duly seconded by Bert Overton upon purpose of incorporation stated, "...we express our determination as a corporation that it is our purpose to retain possession of, and supervision of the affairs and care of Bethel Cemetery at Swanwick." The motion carried. Three trustees were chosen as follows: Homer Pressley term 15 years, Lawrence Darrough term 10 years, Ben Leich term 5 years. The Swanwick Bethel Cemetery Association was a legally organized association under the laws of the State of Illinois as of September 25, 1948. The next year in February of 1949 the United Presbyterian Church of Swanwick deeded the cemetery to the newly formed association.

Now it is time to take a good hard look at how the money from the picnic was really earned. From the beginning fried chicken was a main item on the menu. No one knows nor would anyone dare guess how many fryers were used at that first picnic. It is known that year after year more chickens were used, all of which were donated in the early years. Many women of the community were meeting the day previous at Mrs. Mary Cassetta's home across the road from the picnic grounds to dress chickens. Before fryers were purchased in the early 1950's, these women were dressing between 125 and 150 young chickens. They had to be cooled and then packed with ice so they would not spoil in the August heat. The next morning the meal was prepared.

Many years this meal was served more or less family style. The paying guest was served chicken and from the table you helped yourself to bread, potato salad, sliced tomatoes, sliced cucumbers in sour dressing, slaw, green beans, boiled chicken with noodles and dressing. For dessert you chose either homemade pie or cake. Iced tea and coffee were the drinks. Literally gallons of these were poured into glasses and cups. In 1952, two hundred dressed fryers were purchased and seventeen were donated. That year forty hens were cooked for the noodles and the dressing. Certain women made noodles days ahead of time to have them properly dried and ready. In due time men took over the frying in large pans made of heavy steel by Mr. Janto Frassato for that special purpose. Lawrence Robb and W.C. "Peck" Stewart were usually "chief fryers". They solicited their own help when more was needed. It was no child's play serving such a meal. In 1953 the kitchen cleared \$277.00 from the meal. In 1954 the Association gave the kitchen workers the privilege of purchasing equipment, pots, pans, etc., that were needed. In 1955 the kitchen purchased 50 loaves of

# SWANWICK'S

17th ANNUAL HOMECOMING

# PICNIC

**THURSDAY AUGUST 7, 1952**

Proceeds of Picnic for Benefit of the Cemetery

Program both Afternoon and Evening

**Curly Joe and Paula from Station WCIL**  
of Carbondale, Illinois will entertain and  
Conduct an Amateur Show

See and Hear Talent from far and near--also Local Talent

Cash Prizes amounting to \$100.00 has been provided for the amateur program

**Fried Chicken and other good Eats**

**Bingo, Rides and other Picnic Concessions**

**Visit Swanwick Picnic Grounds, August 7th**

Republican Print, Coulterville, Ill.

COURTESY OF MR. AVIE WOODSIDE



bread for their meal at 16¢ per loaf or \$8.00 worth of bread. In 1956 the picnic date was set for Friday instead of Thursday. So 150 fryers were purchased as well as 150 lbs. of fish. Two bushels of potatoes were made into potato salad as an accompaniment. Four hundred-eighty-three meals were sold in 1959. In later years it was thought perhaps the meal was too expensive so the menu was revised and the cost in 1970 was \$2.00. In 1975 the price was raised to \$3.00 for adults and \$1.25 for children.

While the kitchen people were serving suppers a hard working crew managed the hamburger stand just west of the kitchens. For many, many years Mr. John Neville with members of his family and friends worked here. From the supper hour on, these good folk worked as hard and as fast as possible until the last minutes of the picnic or until they ran out of food. In 1970 permanent facilities were made for this stand and at last there was a roof over their heads.

On the grounds throughout the years there were at different times a lemonade stand, a soda stand, a penny pitch, an ice cream stand, pony rides and some years there were rides and other concessions.

Over the years many interesting things have happened at the Swanwick Picnic. This human interest incident was related by Mrs. Leslie Haggard, a former Swanwick area resident.

In 1936, Mrs. Haggard's sixteen month old daughter, Evelyn Anne, was at that first picnic with her grandmother, Mrs. Annie Haggard. Mrs. Haggard was likely working in the hamburger stand. Grandmother and granddaughter, like most picnickers, were walking over the grounds, stopping now and then to visit with people they knew. It seems they met Mr. James Geggie, President of the 1st National Bank of Coulterville. No doubt Mrs. Haggard spoke to Mr. Geggie and then made a comment about her cute little granddaughter. Grandmothers have always had that privilege. Thereupon the good banker gave Anne an Indian head penny and said something to the effect that if you always have a penny, you will never be totally broke. Grandma Haggard took that penny and carefully tied it into the corner of a woman's red handkerchief so that it wouldn't get lost, as that was a very common way for children to carry money. Those also were the days, before Kleenex, when colored and figured handkerchiefs were fashionable and everyone carried one of some sort.

Fifty years have come and gone. Grandma Haggard and Mr. Geggie are no longer with us. Evelyn Anne grew up and married Nelson Morgenthaler. They reside in the Pinckneyville area. There have been lean times, but the Morgenthalers have never been totally broke because Anne Haggard Morgenthaler still has that Indian head penny tied in that same red handkerchief. At today's inflated prices that Indian head penny would be valued at many

times its original worth by any coin collector. Ben Franklin's old adage is true: "A penny saved is a penny earned."

Still another part of the picnic cannot be over looked. Mrs. Bertha Kelly started a quilt stand, date unknown. The 1952 minutes state that Mrs. Kelly started such a stand "and was retiring from that place." Mrs. Kelly was an excellent salesperson when it came to selling quilt stand raffle tickets. It is reported she would attend local fairs, especially on political party days showing no favoritism to either party and would return highly successful. In order to make quilts and embroidered pillow cases a Swanwick Sewing Club was organized at Mrs. H.C. Stewart's home in September 1947. In the early years of the club's history there were between three and four dozen members. They quilted regularly in the Grange Building on the north side of the railroad tracks. Later they used the Swanwick school basement. On the inside back cover of the Farmers Telephone Company 1961 Directory for Swanwick, Illinois, is this paid advertisement.

Swanwick Sewing Club  
Come Help Us, Help You  
Quilting 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month  
at Swanwick School  
Benefit of Swanwick Cemetery  
Pres. Dorothy Leming Phone 2489 Coulterville, IL  
Sec. & Treas. Mae Ervin Phone 8F20 Swanwick, IL

This segment of work went on the whole year and may have brought into the picnic as much or more money than the food area. Many women worked in both places. Mrs. Ethel Frassato states that they started giving away three quilts and several pair of pillow cases in a raffle. Prizes were drawn for the lucky ticket holders in the late hours of the picnic. This proved exceedingly popular and in 1950, six quilts were awarded as follows:

The Applique Quilt to Oscar Krupp, Pinckneyville  
The Step and the Atlas to Leslie Haggard, Pinckneyville  
Rose Garden to Ed Kunz, Pinckneyville  
Friendship Quilt to Rose Kelly, Pinckneyville  
Optical Illusion to Margaret Aitken, Tilden  
Baby Quilt to Roger Wolf, Chester

also four quilts were put in the bingo stand as well as many pairs of pillow cases. One hundred fourteen pair were finished that year. The club regularly bought pillow tubing and stamped pillow cases for embroidery or bought stamped sets. These they distributed to have them finished and returned before picnic time. This year they plan to have about two hundred pair ready.



In 1951 the club had six quilts in the bingo stand for which that stand allowed them \$4.00 for the lining and cotton per quilt. It is supposed there were more sets of pillow cases than the previously ready. Since the club's beginning they have been responsible for thousands of pairs being embroidered and many had hand crocheted edgings as a finishing touch. Those winning the 1951 raffle quilts were:

Applique Quilt to Ralph Dunn, Pinckneyville  
Lone Star to Dorothy Harvey, Marissa  
Rob Peter to Pay Paul to Rose Protroski, Pinckneyville  
Little Star to Anna Bell Brown, Sparta  
Butterfly to Doris Sheppard, Swanwick  
Baby Quilt to Emma Kelly, Pinckneyville

After the picnic the club ordered an appliqued quilt top from Herschner Company for \$5.95, about one tenth the price for a somewhat similar top in that company's 1985 catalog.

The custom of current picnic is to have one quilt, 1/2 beef, five pairs of pillow cases and any donated prizes given from the community. This year, 1985, because it is the picnic's Golden Anniversary, the ladies have made a special gold and white Golden Wedding Ring Quilt as the top raffle prize. Mrs. Ethel Frassato pieced the top and the Sewing Club did the quilting. There will be quilts in the bingo stand as well.

Several times the bingo stand has been mentioned. This was another popular money maker. Gene Monti was for many years chairman and worked there faithfully. There were years when it was very difficult to obtain pillow cases or material with which to make them. Then various other prizes such as aprons and sugar were used only to have unhappy and unsatisfied patrons. Therefore a pair of pillow cases became the standard gift. It became necessary over the years to increase the seating capacity for this endeavor.

With money to use the Swanwick Bethel Cemetery Association now began to improve the cemetery. In June 1954, 6 acres additional land was obtained for a sum of \$1700.00 from Robert and Lottie Cupples heirs. This addition contains 243 lots, 10'x20' with room on each lot for five graves. It was surveyed and platted by Leo Morski, Engineer, in November, 1955, and was supervised by the late Mr. Janto Frassato.

For many years after the kitchen was built a large tent was rented at picnic time to shelter the dining area. In 1954 a tent was secured for \$37.50 and continued to be used until about 1965. The tent made a satisfactory dining room when the weather was nice. At one picnic however a summer wind and rain storm came up and the tent was blown down upon the tables. The minutes are

West

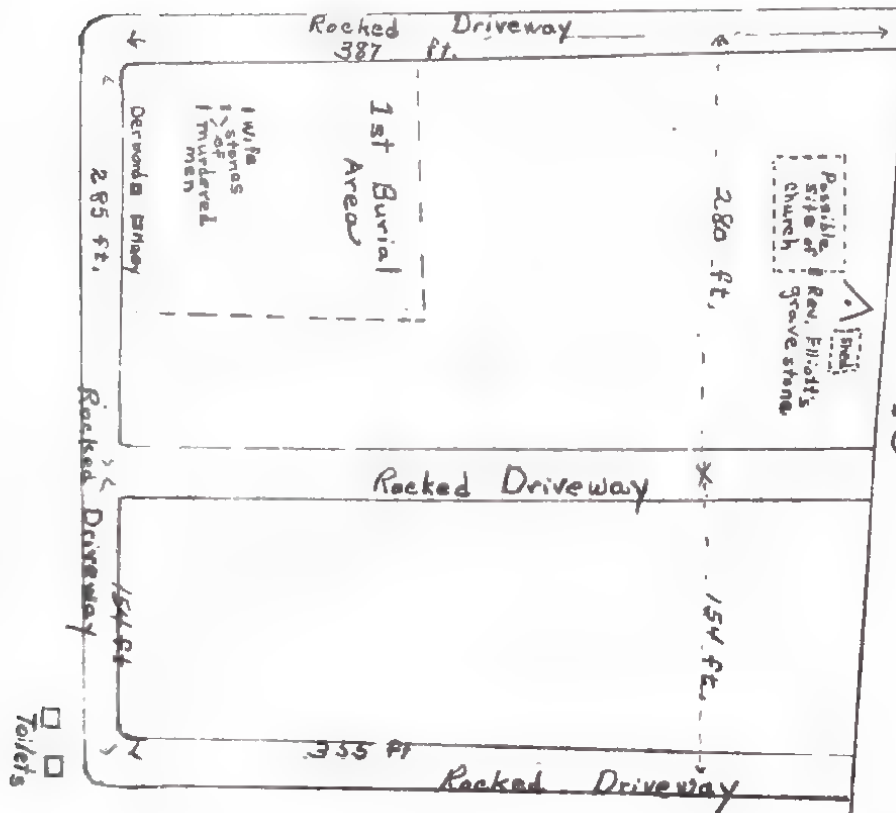
Cupples Heirs Acquisition  
June 16, 1954

6 Acres  
↑

South

Wooded Fence Row

South



Picnic Area

Shed

Building

Rock Road

East 3 Acres ↓

Casatta Acquisition  
Aug. 9, 1967

East

Illinois Route 13

North

vague but it appears about 1964 or 1965 a shelter or pavilion was built which was attached to the east side of the kitchen. For several years this area was furnished with fresh sawdust at picnic time but some years later a concrete floor was poured. A permanent dinning place became part of the facilities. The tent was then sold for \$50.00. About 10 years earlier a shed type building had been erected to the south or back of the kitchen under the supervision of Virgil Davis. This covered the grill type permanent stove area.

In the late 60's and early 70's the association sponsored a horse show for a few years. In 1970 the Horse Show netted \$256.43. That same year the picnic cleared \$2044.05, which totaled \$2300.48 money earned for that year.

Again in 1967 the association purchased land. This area was from Peter Casetta and his wife Mary Casetta across the rock road just east from the now 12 acre plot. The land was deeded to the Swanwick Bethel Cemetery Association, August 9, 1967 and contained 3 acres. In current years this has been used as a parking lot.

In 1975 new rest rooms were built. The driveways received more rock in the 1970's. In 1976 a sign which bore the cemetery's name was erected along with a flag pole along highway 13. At about this time, the Coulterville V.F.W. and Rev. Mathenia were asked to help with the Memorial Day services. Memorial Day Services were then started each year in addition to the flags being set at all veteran's graves, this practice was started years ago by Gene Monti, who loved and knew the cemetery by heart. Later assisted by Kenneth Bumann, a long time member. Sometime within this period a stationary stage was built thus eliminating yearly construction. Many of the old stones had fallen over. Most of these were set upright by the custodian, Mr. Tanner. This was not permanent however and many have retopped, due mostly to freezing and thawing of the ground.

Perhaps by far the wisest and most far reaching thing accomplished by the Association was the establishment of an irrevocable trust set up in 1972 after much discussion and probing as to the best way to secure money for future cemetery care. The Illinois law makers had enacted into law a Cemetery Care Act in July of 1943. This was an act to regulate the care funds for cemeteries and it provided that monies might be placed in trust in perpetuity. Only the interest in the invested amount might be used for cemetery care. This could be done only if the organization was a "not for profit" organization and could meet certain stated standards. Under this act a trust fund of \$15,000.00 was begun but it was so drawn up that money might be added. In 1974 and 1975, \$5,000.00 more was added each year making a total of \$25,000.00 in the trust. As trusts go, this amount is indeed small potatoes, but on the other hand it was a tremendous



# SWANWICK'S

38th ANNUAL HOMECOMING

# PICNIC

**Thursday, August 2  
1973**

PROCEEDS OF PICNIC FOR BENEFIT OF CEMETERY

---

ENTERTAINMENT

FOREST MATHIS TRIO

Bob Williams

Joe Berneking

---

CHICKEN SUPPER

Serving Starts at 4:30

Donations of Pies and Cakes Appreciated

Help and Workers Will Be Appreciated

---

Quilt Stand

Drawing for Quilts  
and other Prizes

Bingo

---

GAMES

RIDES AND OTHER PICNIC CONCESSIONS

Not Responsible For Accidents

COURTESY OF MRS. NORAL McCAULEY

accomplishment for a small community cemetery association. Try to imagine all the thousands of hours work, all the sweat from the August heat, and all the committee meetings and planning that made such an accomplishment possible. It was an act, if the trust can be enlarged, that will in future years prevent the prairie ever again claiming back the land used as a final resting place for the beloved of the area.

If this sounds all so easy and harmonious, remember that the communities of Swanwick and Winkle, now really one, are made up of very ordinary people, no better or no worse than any other rural area in the United States. Human nature seems to change not at all. There were times of serious disagreement. Many an individual had feelings hurt - some ceased helping and some overlooked the hurt and went on. Yet when one dropped out for whatever reason others were found to pick up the load. Alvin Ervin served for many years as President of the Cemetery Association and his brother Elmer Ervin, a local school teacher, sold the dinner tickets at the northeast window of the kitchen. When he became unable to fulfill that chore, another stepped up to take the place. So when early workers aged and became unable or passed away, sons and daughters picked up the work. If you know the community see if you can't find perhaps a third or even a fourth generation youngster performing in a 4-H Skit or waiting on tables at the 50th Swanwick Picnic.

The whole endeavor exemplifies much that is good in our wonderful country. Such virtues as volunteerism, Cooperation,, community or civic pride, and respect for those gone on ahead, keep not only the community but the country strong and vital. Faith in God is also essential. It is the hope of us all that this our natal area as well as our nation continues strong and vital for centuries to come.

## THOSE HONORED WITH FLAGS ON MEMORIAL DAY

Black Hawk Indian War	1822	John C. Huey
Mexican War	1845	John M. O'Neil & Davidson C. Moore
Spanish American War	1898	William E. Douglas

### World War I 1916-1918

Samuel Logan Meader  
 Francis (Frank) Ogilvie  
 Robert Ogilvie  
 Thomas Sherman Irwin  
 Carl A. Wilson  
 Robert J. Dalas  
 Dr. James S. Cleland  
 Zenas Allen Robb  
 Charles Wylie  
 Walter L. Pinkerton  
 Henry Max Vogel  
 Louis Lyman Vogel  
 Clarence Chappel  
 John Aitken  
 Homer Wilson Pressly  
 James Mody Quigley  
 David E. Clark  
 Edward Segelhorst  
 John Gelonek  
 Charles Schaeffer

### World War II 1942-1945

Wesley Kelly  
 Harold A. Owens  
 Loran Coats  
 John Chappel  
 Brady W. Jackson  
 Gilford L. Leming  
 Leroy F. Bumann - Army Air Force  
 Virgil Davis  
 John Wylie - Career-Korea & Vietnam  
 John Landon Gray  
 Clarence Arthur Hottes - Air Force  
 Woodrow Perkey - Army of Occupation  
 Lawrence E. Rainey  
 Harry G. Stough - Navy  
 Delbert H. Weinoffer  
 Harry Fullerton - Navy  
 Joseph H. Baker - Marine Corps  
 Ahart Schwarz  
 Joseph Doyle  
 James B. Magruder  
 James Edward Hale  
 M. Romane Varnum - Navy, Pacific Area  
 Kenneth Ned Hall - Navy  
 Fortunato J. Segafredo  
 Jesse Hood  
 Harry H. Whitson  
 Eugene W. McDaniel  
 Harold K. Folden  
 Harold Leo Bowers



Peace Time Navy	Waldo Quigley
Korean War	John Edward Rettinger - & Vietnam Milledge H. Williamson
Vietnam	Kenneth R. Hall Doyle Lynn Hackworth, Sr. - Navy Byron August Selle - Navy
Corporal U.S. Marine	David Wayne Vancil
Daughters of American Revolution	Mary Bell Jane Beggs Margaret C. Aitken

Plus the thirty Civil War Veterans written of in the sketch.







